... And There Was Life in the Valley

Winter in the mountains and valleys of Deseret was a test of faith nd stamina for the pioneer Saints. Snows and bitter blowing winds ame early and lasted long. In the high valleys of the Wasatch the osts were heavy in September and snows were on the ground in Oc- ober. Spring sunshine rarely melted the earth's snow crust until late March or April, leaving only about five summer months to prepare for old, ice and snow all over again.

Anxieties about the weather were sharply accentuated for some 11 oneer families in Utah Valley during the winter of 1858-59, for they ere making plans to move into new homes high in the Wasatch moun- ns when Spring came.

The road through Provo Canyon had been finished before the snows l and a bridge spanned the Provo River. With the decision made to ve into the valley, they spent the short days and long, crisp winter hts in building furniture and making clothes. Plows had to be sharp- ed and harrows made ready for the sagebrush and soil of the new coun- Wagons had to be repaired and those who lacked teams had to ac- re them.

William Meeks was appointed leader of the group and they met quently under his direction to ask the Lord to bless them in their prep- ations. Their constant prayer was that the elements would be tem- red so they could mature crops and sustain themselves and their families the new country.

Spring came late in 1859 and it was the last day of April before group of 11 men with their three wagons and teams of oxen could ve Provo.

Families of the men had agreed to remain behind in Provo until log bins could be built and other preparations made for their coming. Tear- lly, the wives and children stood by that April morning as they watched eir husbands and fathers start out toward Provo Canyon and a new e.

Facing the uncertainties of the venture were Thomas Rasband, John ook, Charles N. Carroll, John Carlile, John Jordan, Henry Chatwin, e Bond, James Carlile, William Giles Jr., William Carpenter and rge Carlile.

Winter and the forces of nature had played havoc with the road in ny places and traveling was slow. In addition, several snowslides ocked the route, making the journey hazardous as well as exhausting.

FORT HEBER

Old Fort Heber showing the locations of the families who built their homes there in 1859.

The area for the fort was 80 rods square, lying between what is now First West and Fourth West Streets and 2nd North and 5th North Streets.

Within that fort area the company of men built their houses close together, with sufficient openings to let their stock in and out. The houses were built with green cottonwood logs that were cut on the river bottoms.

Dirt floors, dirt roofs and mud packed between the logs were the order of the day.

When the crops were planted and the log huts prepared, the men left the valley and went back to Provo where happy families greeted them with shouts of "How's the weather?" and "When are we going?"

With wives, children, cows, pigs, chickens and all their earthly possessions packed, the original company started out and were joined by others who were cheered by the reports of a good summer and plenty of farming land and irrigation water. Some of the additional families who came were Thomas H. Giles, John Giles, Hiram Oaks and George Carlile.

During that first summer, some 1,000 bushels of grain were raised in the valley. Though some of the wheat crop was injured by early frost, it could still be made into flour and the settlers rejoiced for the blessings of the harvest. Because the nearest gristmill was in Provo and a four-days' journey away, many of the people ground flour in small hand mills or boiled the wheat and ate it whole with milk.

With the crops in and summer on the wane, dread winter agai loomed up before the people. Farming efforts had been to raise whea and other crops to sustain human life, and so before winter came it wa necessary to cut meadow hay and swamp grass for cattle wherever i could be found. All of it had to be cut by hand with a scythe, whic proved to be the hardest work of the summer.

Many of the men who had come to the valley during the summe and raised their crops decided that they would return to Provo for th winter rather than provide hay for their cattle and be shut out from th rest of the world for the long winter months.

However, 18 families had cast their lot with Provo Valley an through the winter they stayed. These families, according to the journa of John Crook, were Thomas Rasband, John Crook, Charles N. Carrol John Jordan, Alexander Sessions, Bradford Sessions, Hiram Oaks, Joh Lee, Richard Jones, James Davis, William Davidson, James Laird, Joh Sessions, Elisha Thomas, James Carlile and George Carlile. Jane Clo worthy and Elizabeth Carlile were both widows. Charles C. Thoma unmarried, lived with his brother Elisha. No record is made of the exa number of women and children.

The first birth among the settlers in the valley occurred in Noven ber. The child, a daughter of William Davidson and his wife, Elle was named Timpanogos, the Indian name for the valley and the promine mountain that lay at the west.

For those who remained, the first winter in the valley was a long ar dreary one. The snow fell early and was several feet deep. For near four months they were without communication from the rest of the worl

At Christmas time, however, a group of young people from Pro braved the weather and came through the canyon by sleigh and spent t holiday season with the families in the valley. They soon left and no o else came into the valley until the snows melted.

to the valley. It was small and threshed very slowly, using horses as its source of power. When the grain had been through the machine it still had to be run through a fanning mill to separate the kernels from the chaff. This mill was hand operated and also very slow. As a result, some of the grain did not get harvested before winter set in.

The prospects of winter seemed less bleak that year for there were many more people in the valley and more adequate preparations had been made. To help the time pass more quickly, a dramatics group was organized. Some very good plays were produced with John Crook, James Duke, C. N. Carroll, John Galligher and John Jordan taking the leads.

The saints also could look forward to regular Church services on Sundays in their new meeting house. A choir was organized to help with the music and John Crook, talented in many lines, served as the choir leader.

JOHN CROOK
Original Settler and Early Historian

Schools were also conducted during the winter months for the education of the people. John M. Young was the first school teacher and the classes were held in the meeting house with students sitting on rough benches or stools using make-shift desks fastened to the walls.

There were other interests in the new valley too, for the records show that on Christmas Day, 1860, Charles C. Thomas claimed as his bride, Emmaline Sessions. They were married by Thomas Rasband in the first ceremony to be performed in the valley. That evening another couple, Harvey Meeks and a Miss Dougal were married at Center Creek by Silas Smith.

According to John Crook's journal, those who spent the winter of 60-61 in the fort with their families were:

North Side: John Carlile, John Crook, Thomas Rasband, James arlile, Fred Giles, Robert S. Duke, Willis Boren, James Davis, Robert roadhead, Hyrum Oaks, Alfred Johnson, Sam Rooker, William Damaron, ames Lamon and John Lee.

East Side: Alex Sessions, Richard Jones, Elisha Thomas, Bradford essions, Isaac Cummings, Darwin Walton, John Cummings Sr., Charles Carroll, George Damaron, Bailes Sprouse, Thomas Hicken, George hompson and Norton Jacobs.

South Side: Thomas Moulton, Patrick Carroll, William Forman, hn Muir, John M. Murdock, Thomas Todd, Cal Henry and Robert arlile.

West Side: Jane Clotworthy, Zemira Palmer, James Duke, James ird, Cub Johnson, John Davis, Robert Parker, Terry Burns, William cDonald, John Hamilton, George W. Clyde, John Witt, Joseph S. cDonald, John Jordan, a Mr. Russell and John McDonald.

By the time Spring was welcomed in 1861 the community of Heber s recognized by Church leaders in Salt Lake City as being large enough organize into a ward. Thus, early in 1861 Joseph S. Murdock was dained as bishop of the new ward by President Brigham Young and t from American Fork to Heber to take charge of Church affairs. He se as his counselors John W. Witt and Thomas Rasband. John milton served as ward clerk.

Bishop Murdock also served as presiding bishop of the valley and ected the Church efforts of presiding elders who were called in the ll communities that had begun to spring up in the valley. These mmunity developments are discussed separately in later chapters.

The year 1861 proved to be a year of many significant accomplish-nts. With Church activity on an organized basis and the individual nes as well fixed as possible for that time, the settlers began to look ommunity improvements.

Provisions were made for old and new settlers to plant vegetable dens outside the fort. Ephraim Smith and William P. Reynolds built hopper run by horse power to chop wheat for those who could not to the mills in Provo. While it was still somewhat crude, the chopper s a great help to those who had been grinding their flour in small hand lls.

Another bridge was built over the Provo River, this one located six es north of Heber on the road to Salt Lake City. A good wagon road s also made through Provo Canyon, with toll being charged for use the road.

John M. Murdock organized a cooperative sheep herd in 1860 and red for the sheep during the summer months himself. He was able to e the sheep far enough south to winter out so that they did not need cial supplies of hay. This method of caring for the sheep enabled

FIRST WASATCH COUNTY STAKE PRESIDENCY

President Abram Hatch

Thomas H. Giles
First Counselor

Henry S. Alexander
Second Counselor

County. The wards at that time were Heber East, Heber West, Midway, Wallsburg, Charleston, Buysville, Upper Daniels, Center, Lake Creek, Francis, Benchcreek, Elkhorn, Riverdale and Woodland. In Uintah County there were Ashley Center, Mill District, Ashley Fork and Merrill Wards.

Some of the stake officers appointed at the time of stake organization were Thomas Todd, president of the Elders Quorum with Orson Hicken and Henry Ohlwiler as counselors. John M. Murdock was named president of the High Priests Quorum with John Jordan and Charles N. Carroll as counselors. Thomas Rasband was appointed to preside over the priests, Thomas Hicken Sr. to preside over teachers and J. Heber Moulton over the deacons. William Forman was named to act as the agent for the Presiding Bishop of the Church. Emma Brown

white top wagons firing guns and waving a large banner "Theatre Tonight." Needless to say, the stunts usually drew a full house.

By 1873 the community badly needed the theatre building that had been started in 1862, and so efforts began anew to complete the building. However, a more central location was felt desirable, and so a site was secured near 145 North Main. The two stone walls that had previously been built were torn down and the materials used in the foundation of the new building. Work was finished in time for the winter season, and proceeds from five plays produced early in 1874 helped to defray costs of the building and some new scenery. The new building became known as the Heber Social Hall, and later was called the Old Hall.

Directing the new theatrical work in the Social Hall was a reorganized committee consisting of James Duke, president; John Crook, vice president; Charles N. Carroll, secretary; William H. Walker, musical director and Patrick Carroll, stage carpenter.

On January 13, 1874, the group produced "The Charcoal Burner," and "Bombastus Furico." January 27 the fare included "The Mistletoe Bough," and "Deaf as a Post." Produced on February 10 were "A Roland for an Oliver," and "The Toodles." Finally on March 10 they staged "The Rent Day," and "The Omnibus."

Some of the performers in these productions included James and John Duke, Charles N., Willard and Lottie Carroll, Sarah Murdoch, John Jordan, Thomas Hicken Jr., Joseph Cluff, William and Robert Lindsay, Annie R. Duke, Elizabeth Moulton Hicken, Emma Carlile Alexander Fortie, John Galligher and Bessie Jordan.

Dramatic efforts in Heber were spearheaded by the Dramatic Association until October of 1884 when the group was dissolved and a new organization known as the Heber Dramatic Combination was formed. John Crook, Ira N. Jacobs, Alex Fortie, Henry Clegg and John W. Crook were officers of the group, which continued to use the old Social Hall for theatrical performances. A number of traveling companies passed through Heber during these years and made use of the theatre for performances. Fees at first were $6 for use of the hall and scenery, and later this was reduced to $5.

Because Heber audiences had taken advantage of dramatic and cultural events through the years the community became well known for appearances by traveling companies. Agents sought bookings in Heber because they knew the performances would be well received. Some of the more frequently appearing groups included the Courtney Morgan plays, the Moore-Ether Theatrical Company, the Great La Reno and the Ellison-White Chautauqua group who included Heber on their international circuit for many years.

One of the first projects of the officers of the new Combination was to add important new pieces of scenery to the Hall, including several scenes painted by W. C. Morris of Salt Lake City.

local dramatic group who performed the play "Uncle Josh" in 1912 included: Back ... left to right, DeVera Smith, O. A. Whitaker, F. Clayton Montgomery, James John-... E. Parley Cliff, Charles Bronson. Front row, Loretta Neff, William Ha... Char-... DeGraff and Charles Broadbent.

...m Davidson, Sarah Cummings, Richard Smith, Emma Carlile, Mr. ...d Mrs. John Gallagher, Golda Johnson, John Jordan, C. N. Carroll, ...nanda Smith, Joseph Cluff and the Lindsay boys, Robert and William.

By the early 1900's the schools of Heber, particularly the high ...ool, had begun dramatic productions and there was no longer the ...d for separate community productions. Dramatic work at Wasatch ...h School has always been of the highest caliber and many students ...e learned a deep love for the theatre through their participation in ...ool productions.

One of the more outstanding dramatic endeavors outside the schools ...s a group of three "esthetic entertainers" who called themselves the ...rtheorso." The three, Orson Ryan, Pearl Buys and Theodore Ben-...min Miller, appeared in reading recitals throughout the valley. A ...08 handbill advertised them as a group offering impersonations, charac-...r sketches, imitations and sparkling dialogue with touches of sun-...ine, pathos, laughter, shadow, joy, tears and gems from popular and ...assic drama.

Particularly noteworthy in their contributions to drama in the com-...unity are Charles DeGraff, who has done much through the MIA ...rama program, and Loreta Neff who has been a popular dramatic direc-...or in the area.